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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at M3.

Organ and Tissue Donation FAQs

Organ donation and transplantation is a procedure in which organs or tissues from one individual (the donor) are placed into another person's body (the recipient).

Why Become An Organ Donor?

The science of organ transplantation has made great strides in recent years. However, finding organs is still a challenge - there is a critical shortage of organs while the number of people waiting to receive them is rising. There are over 100,000 people on the national organ transplantation waiting list. One organ donor can save or help as many as 50 people.

How Do I Become A Donor?

There are several ways:

- State your intent to be an organ donor on your driver's license.
- Fill out a donor card and carry it in your wallet. Download one at: organdonor.gov/donor/index.htm.
- Tell your loved ones you want to be a donor so they know your wishes. An estimated 35 percent of potential donors never become one because the family won't provide consent.

What Organs And Tissues Can Be Donated?

- Organs: heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver, and intestines
- Tissues: corneas, skin, veins, bone, bone marrow, heart

valves, middle ear, tendons, and ligaments

What Costs Are Associated With Donating Organs?

None. All costs related to donation are paid by the organ recipients and their insurance.

Will My Intent To Be A Donor Affect The Quality Of Medical Care I Receive?

No. A transplant team isn't involved until doctors have determined that all possible efforts to save a patient's life have been exhausted.

Does Organ Donation Cause Disfigurement?

No. Organ donation does not change the appearance of the body, and the procedure will not interfere with having a funeral - including an open casket service.

Who Manages The Distribution Of Organs?

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains the national Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network. Through the UNOS, organ donors are matched to waiting recipients 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Patients are matched to organs

based on a number of factors, including blood and tissue type, medical urgency, the recipient's time on the waiting list and geographical location.

How Much Does A Transplant Cost?

Transplants include many costs, including pre-transplant testing, costs of procuring the donated organ, the surgery itself, follow-up care and lifetime prescription drugs. These costs can total hundreds of thousands of dollars - a significant expense for any person, but a catastrophic figure for those without insurance. Sadly, without a payment guarantee, a person in need of an organ cannot be placed on a waiting list.



Did You Know...?

Advances in surgical techniques, organ preservation and the development of more effective drugs have greatly improved transplant success rates. Three-year average survival rates range from 70 percent to 95 percent, depending on the type of organ.